

VZCZCXRO3193

OO RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHRS RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHHE #0160 1201202
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 301202Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4943
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS HELSINKI 000160

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)

AMGT, MG, FI

SUBJECT: MSGF01: THREE FINNS TESTED FOR SWINE FLU; TAMIFLU AND
MASKS FLYING OFF PHARMACY SHELVES

Ref: State 42349

¶1. (U) Three Finnish citizens who recently returned from travelling in Mexico have been tested for possible swine flu. One test has come back negative; the other two test results should be known within a week. The case garnering intense media attention involves an elderly woman who returned to Lahti (100 kms north of Helsinki) two weeks ago after living in Mexico for nine months. According to local press reports, she exhibited flu-like symptoms for one week before finally seeking medical assistance at a local hospital. She was immediately placed in isolation, her condition is mild and stable, she's taking antiviral drugs, and she is in no danger.

¶2. (U) The Finnish Government announced April 28 that it will acquire more antiviral drugs and protective clothing for medical personnel. More than 880,000 doses of the antiviral Relenza are to be stockpiled, as well as an additional 90,000 more doses of Tamiflu, in addition to the more than 90,000 that have already been stockpiled. Finland has also decided to acquire a vaccine against swine flu as soon as one becomes available even though no such vaccine yet exists. Finnish travelers have been urged to defer travel to Mexico for the time being. Local newspapers have also reported that Finns - alarmed about the swine flu - are buying up stocks of Tamiflu and protective masks, even the ineffective surgical masks and hand wash. Many pharmacies in the Helsinki region are running out of masks and customers are being referred to hardware stores for more effective masks.

¶3. (SBU) Embassy Helsinki's EAC met on April 29 to discuss and review the Post's Emergency Action Plan, pandemic influenza tripwires, and Mission preparedness. EAC determined that tripwires had not been triggered and that it would recommend in any case that Americans (including Embassy staff) seek care in Finland rather than depart for the United States.

Butler